

# *The* Commonweal

*May 11, 1951*

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*REASON OR RHETORIC?*

## *The MacArthur Argument*

HAROLD C. HINTON

*ENCYCLICALS' ANNIVERSARY*

## *After Sixty Years*

JOHN C. CORT

## *Stephen Spender*

ANNE FREMANTLE

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*Volume LIV*

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# The Commonweal

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WEEK BY WEEK

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## THE FAR EAST: A TIME FOR DECISION

**I**N THE last few days we have received a number of letters from readers who have not, to put it mildly, agreed with the editorial opinion we expressed when we endorsed President Truman's decision to replace General MacArthur. We have been rather surprised to find that one assumption in particular runs through almost all the letters of protest, an assumption that is actually quite unwarranted and one that has apparently had the effect of misrepresenting our views in the minds of some of our readers.

It seems to have been taken for granted that when we approved the President's action in the MacArthur affair, we were in effect approving the Administration's Far Eastern policy of the last six years. Actually it was not our intention to plead a general defense of the Administration's policy; in fact, as we said in our issue of July 21, 1950, we feel that "the steady deterioration of our position in Asia is the most vulnerable failure in the long reign of the Democrats." Our reasons for supporting the President in this particular decision regarding the Orient can perhaps best be explained in terms of a somewhat comprehensive review of past and present events in the Far East.

### The New Imperialism

**B**Y THE end of World War II it was clear to all the world that almost all of Asia was in a state of revolt against Western economic and political colonialism; as events in, for example, India, Indonesia, Indo-China and Burma were to prove, the determination of the Asiatics to assert their freedom from

Western control was not to be denied. But as events in China were also to prove, the great tragedy was that the Asiatic peoples were throwing off Western colonialism before they were strong enough to stand on their own feet, and as they did so they faced the far worse danger of falling under the satellite-colonialism of Soviet Russian imperialism.

This, then, became the real question in Asia from 1945 onward: was nationalism to emerge as a political force strong enough to assure the security of national sovereignties, or was nationalism to be turned back and submerged under the rising tide of Soviet imperialism?

The answer depended to a great extent on the course of events in China. By virtue of her size, population and geographic location, China dominated the mainland and when, in 1945, Japan became a power vacuum as a result of the war, China stood in a position to exercise her dominance over Asia, for good or for bad, depending upon the nature of the regime that would finally succeed in unifying the country and making a power out of the vast Chinese potential.

Such were the high stakes of the Chinese civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists. It was in 1945, a year when the minds of most Americans were lightly turned to thoughts of victory, disarmament and television sets, that a decisive turn of affairs came in China. As a result of the Yalta Conference of February 1945, Russia obtained "preeminent interests" in Manchuria, the strategic heart of China; the Soviets then proceeded to violate these concessions by taking

virtual control of all Manchuria; subsequently the Russians turned over huge supplies of weapons to the Chinese Communist Army in Manchuria and with this assistance, the Chinese Red Army was able to move southward and drive Chiang Kai-shek off the mainland to his present refuge on Formosa.

### A Losing Policy

It was true, as the Americans said later, that Chiang's Kuomintang was a weak government disintegrating from within, but it was also true—and this the Administration has been less willing to admit—that an indecisive American foreign policy in China was partly responsible for Chiang's defeat at the hands of the Communists. Our policy at the time was this: we called for a cease-fire in the civil war, stopped shipping arms to Chiang and tried to draw the Communists into a coalition government in which Chiang's Nationalists would have had the majority power. The trouble with this scheme was that it was largely based on the hope that the Chinese Communists were not necessarily Stalinists and that they would cooperate in such a government and not overthrow it, as the Communists had done in other post-war coalition governments in Eastern Europe. In retrospect, it was a naive hope indeed. And there is evidence—such as the magazine *Amerasia*—to prove that this approach to the Chinese Communists was subtly propagated in the United States by journalists and experts whose motives were, to say the least, questionable.

Our Far Eastern policy was, surely, a losing policy and since it was

subject to suspicious influences, some Americans have jumped to wild conclusions, ignoring the fact that many of those who advocated this policy had sincere motives but were, unfortunately, the victims of bad judgment.

### The 'Nationalist Urge'

**W**E ARE sure that today no American who is honest with himself, whether he is a Democrat or a Republican, will deny that the United States was seriously responsible for the downfall of China, so much so that if we had the last six years to live over again, we would do things a lot differently there.

But the fact is, we do not have those years to live over again. What we do have to think about now is the future, and as we know already, the fall of China has threatened the future security of the United States, because China, in alliance with Russia, is a power-combine that will have to be reckoned with. And so, stating the matter in terms of this power-combine, we get back again to the same fundamental question in all Asian politics, the question of nationalism and imperialism: is Communist China a nationalist power or is it a satellite of Soviet Russia? That question is the decisive one and it has to be answered before we can have a realistic Far Eastern foreign policy and before we can decide what to do about Formosa, Korea and the admission of Communist China to the UN.

In this respect, General MacArthur had the following to say in his address to Congress: "A nationalist urge," he said, "has been brought to its greatest fruition under the present [Chinese] regime to the point that it has now taken on the character of a united nationalism of increasingly dominant aggressive tendencies. . . . This has produced a new and dominant power in Asia, which, for its own purposes, is allied with Soviet Russia but which in its own concepts and methods has become aggressively imperialistic, with a lust for expansion and increased power normal to this type of imperialism." It is fair to say that if it had been Secretary Acheson who

made these statements, he would have been instantly jumped on by the Luce publications, the Hearst press and several million Americans. The State Department has been much abused for holding just this view: namely, that Communist China "for its own purposes is allied with Soviet Russia." This would seem to make Chinese Communist nationalism an independent, self-willed spirit; the implication of General MacArthur's statement is that someday, when China wakes up and finds that she is in the jaws of imperialist Russia, she may well do something about it—which is precisely what the State Department has been saying.

Now unfortunately, the record of recent history as we have sketched it here does not seem to substantiate the view that Communist China is united with Soviet Russia "for its own purposes." It seems clear that the Chinese Reds have united with Russia for the purposes of Russian imperialism, for the sake of the Communist world revolution. It is true that there are strong reasons for saying that self-interest will eventually drive the two countries apart, and it is wise for the State Department to try to exploit these motives of nationalist self-interest and to be careful not to drive the two countries together; but so far as we can see now, it would be foolhardy of us to base our policy on the

hope that the Chinese Reds are not Moscow-controlled, or that they will emulate the Titoists.

### Last Chance

**F**OR the crucial facts seem to be these: in terms of power, Stalin now controls China; the Soviet Army, Navy and Air Force are already based on or near Chinese soil and whether the Chinese Reds like it or not, they are in no position to revolt. It seems ridiculous to think, therefore, that Stalin will stand by and let Manchuria be bombed—not only because he cannot afford to lose China, but because he cannot afford to alienate Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Reds, who will appeal for his help and whose appeal he cannot turn down without encouraging the Chinese Reds to follow whatever nationalist intentions they may have of going off on their own.

It is for these reasons that we believe that an attack on Manchuria will run a grave risk of setting off World War III. Since the Western powers are not ready for that war, we consider an extension of the Korean war unwise; we have urged instead an immediate buildup of Allied defenses in the hope that our strength will rise to a point where Russia cannot afford to challenge us. There is, we believe, this last hope for world peace without capitulation to the Soviets, and we favor holding on to every last chance for peace just as long as it is honorable to do so.

So far as our Far Eastern policy is concerned, we believe that the time for decision has come. We must decide, as best we can, what the intentions of the Chinese Communists are. And if they are what they appear to be, then we should hold Formosa—not because it is necessarily essential to our defense, but because it is an island in the free world where there are men fighting Communist aggression. The fate of Formosa, as well as the question of Chinese representation in the UN, may at some time be decided by the UN itself, but as of today, it is hard to see how that organization can deal honorably with a regime that is trying to overthrow the UN.

And so the United States must

## • NEXT WEEK •

EUGENE J. MCCARTHY discusses "The State and Human Freedom."

"The negative, protective function is not the only justification for government, that is for the state. It is not even the fundamental one. Man needs the State and this need is not the consequence of natural depravity, nor of the fall of Adam, nor original sin. . . . Man's need for the State rests in his rational, social nature. This need would remain even though man were naturally good. . . . A society of saints would need positive human law."

begin to organize a counteroffensive in Asia. In China itself, it may be wise to encourage the use of Nationalist guerrilla forces against the Communists, if this action would not tie down or directly involve US forces in Asia to the point of jeopardizing our defensive plans elsewhere. As for the rest of Asia, we have for several months been critical of the State Department's psychological failure to grasp the initiative there; we have urged the setting up of some working arrangement in the Pacific similar to the European economic and military security system. The revolution in Asia cannot be won for us by bullets alone; we will have to influence that revolution and turn it toward a democratic end, while allaying any suspicions of our motives.

Surely we can no longer follow a policy of drift and indecision. In August, 1949, when Owen Lattimore was asked to submit a memorandum setting forth his views on Far Eastern policy, he said, among other things, that "it is not possible to make Japan a satisfactory instrument of American policy." This, he said, might lead to "overcommitment of American resources to a distant and vulnerable region." The point is, of course, it is not necessary to make Japan an instrument of American policy; it is necessary to make Japan secure as a free nation and to keep as much of Asia as possible in a similar condition. But, at any rate, so goes the Lattimore doctrine of withdrawal and defeatism. Let us, by all means, have no more of it.

### *The Big Offensive*

**W**ITH the first rays of warm spring sunshine everyone in America has once more hied out of doors. After months of comparative seclusion neighbors can once again be seen pattering around their yards, disporting themselves with their children or simply relaxing in new-found warmth and fragrance. In every direction, in suburb and countryside there are prospects to delight the heart of man. But over in Korea it is the rainy season. Over in Korea hundreds of thousands of

Chinese Communist troops have been hurling themselves against the UN forces, wave upon human wave. A greater contrast cannot be imagined.

Within the past decade other Aprils have presented similar contrasts between untroubled life in one's own backyard and carnage overseas. In the 1940's, though, there were mitigating circumstances. The bulk of the younger able-bodied male population was in the armed services. Men and women at home had all sorts of means of contributing to the common effort: in hospitals, war plants, civilian defense, USO centers, victory gardens. Food and gasoline were rationed. The face of things was different. Most Americans were impelled by a new spirit, united in a common task. Hitler and the Japanese had to be put down in order to establish freedom, justice and a peace that would endure.

Today the United States stands in even greater jeopardy than in the war against the Axis. For the Soviet Union is something more than a powerful monolithic military dictatorship which already embraces one-sixth of the land surface of the globe. It is more than insatiable aggressor exerting relentless pressure against Western Europe, the Orient and the strategic Middle East. It is more than a military colossus which treacherously rearmed while the United States and other former allies were disarming. It is more than a strategic heartland surrounded by neighbors that are political and military pushovers. It is more even than a militarized nation with a growing stockpile of atomic weapons. The Soviet Union has, in herself and in the person of Communist parties the world over, succeeded in designating herself the champion and spokesman of the dispossessed peoples of the earth. Her dynamism, which is directed principally and ultimately at the United States, makes the USSR the most potent and dangerous foe in our whole history.

The Administration has decided with some wisdom on a policy of partial mobilization and strictly limited controls. Because of the key importance of the American economy in

the defense of the West and of free peoples everywhere, a vast war potential is preferable now to a full war footing. But this limited program, while it does raise taxes, fails to engage personally the bulk of the nation's citizenry.

The Marshall aid and Point IV programs likewise embody sound aspects of our over-all strategy. But they also fail to enlist any but a few experts and technicians. And for all the horizons they open up for peoples who have known but the numbing grind of servitude, disease and poverty, these plans have signally failed to kindle the imagination of the American people. Such efforts, if expensive, were necessary; they supplied neither general opportunities for personal commitment nor popular inspiration over here.

And so this country is entering the most critical phase of the effort to construct adequate defenses against Soviet aggression without adequate popular motivation. We are further confused by the MacArthur debate and the absence of inspiring and articulate national leadership. We see no end to the Korean fighting. We are uncertain of our allies. We realize dimly that the buildup of our defenses is approaching a point which may lead Russia to risk everything in a showdown. Yet it all seems to rest in other hands. Extension of the war in Asia depends on Mao and Stalin. In the Balkans it hangs on Russian pressure on the satellites. In Iran and the oil-laden Middle East anything may happen.

There is something deceptive, then, about the tender beauty of this spring, the quiet of the neighborhood, the soothing rays of the noonday sun. Korea itself though physically remote, is the truer symbol of reality. The disquieting thing is that in this epic struggle so few of us are actively engaged. These are the months of destiny; yet most of us are without a role to play. Can we be confident that our limited armed forces in union with our allies—and a few American technicians — can themselves unaided turn the trick? It seems unlikely that we shall be able to repulse the most powerful aggressor in all history with one hand tied behind our back.

## The "Catholic" Position

**T**HIS magazine and the Jesuit weekly *America* support the President in the Truman-MacArthur ruckus. So does the Vatican City paper *L'Osservatore Romano*. That is interesting, of course. But it is also interesting that most Catholic publications in this country are on the other side of the fence. A publication like the pacifist *Catholic Worker*, which sees both men as leading us down the road to ruin, is perched right on the fence, and that is interesting, too. There are three "Catholic" positions on this one issue for you. Maybe the Little Sisters of the Poor or the Carthusian monks, who have given up fretting about political (military?) questions and leave it entirely to others, would provide a fourth.

The Catholic publications in Europe present almost the reverse proportion on the issue. There the majority is solidly behind Truman and a very small minority supports MacArthur.

The point, of course, is that the Catholics in Europe see things as Europeans and in this country the Catholics see things as Americans. They have no more special knowledge, insight or judgment than any other Americans. And they are divided. While the nation is in the throes of another Great Debate about which is the wiser, the safer course of action, it is natural that Catholics too should be divided. You can't flip to a certain page in the catechism to find out if it is Truman or MacArthur who holds the key to security. You have to use your head, and no one will deny that the waters of Baptism flow over all kinds of heads.

The Jesuits are divided, as I suppose they are on practically every political (military?) question. The same week *America* editorially backed Truman, the Brooklyn *Tablet* featured an interview with Father Bernard Hubbard, S.J., the famed Alaskan missionary, who just as squarely backed the General.

All this is as it should be. When, for instance, Democrats by and large see things one way and Republicans, the other, it should not be surprising that Catholic Democrats continue to talk like Democrats, Catholic Republicans still sound like Republicans.

But apparently judging by press reaction to the COMMONWEAL, *America* and *L'Osservatore* stands, there is a general impression abroad that this isn't the way things are at all. Somehow people have gotten the idea that the American Catholic comes in a pretty standard package. It used to be that he was thought of as a straight-ticket Democrat, but in recent years the popular picture of *homo Catholicus Americanus* has changed somewhat. Now, it was felt that he would surely be found lined up behind Douglas MacArthur rather than standing by Harry Truman. When the pro-Truman editorials appeared in the Catholic press, it became a matter for national news items and radio comment.

It's more of a popular impression than a stated thesis

that American Catholics by and large are of one stripe but it is accepted as a political reality. Our political attitudes and reactions to given political situations are looked upon as easily predictable—and it is felt, not without reason, that with the exception of a negligible minority we form a fairly monolithic bloc.

In the political world, the cultural world, the academic world, this minority is either ignored or accepted as a maverick phenomenon: the "liberal Catholic," a term which has been used to describe such Catholic individualists as modern art devotees, ADA members and supporters of "tolerance" groups. The individual Catholic naturally resents hearing his Catholicism hyphenated, especially since on all questions of doctrine, dogma and worship he is one with those who supposedly represent the dominant opinion. But so identified with Catholicism in the popular mind are certain political, social and psychological attitudes that the man who doesn't share them is regarded as something less than orthodox. Taking only extreme examples, the philistine is accepted as thoroughly in accord with the popular notion of the cultural attitude a Catholic is supposed to have, an esthete's orthodoxy is always in question; a rank reactionary fits the mould better than an extreme liberal; an anti-semitic is considered more typical than a tolerance-group president.

Within the Catholic world, from press and platform, the non-conformist is regularly belabored as a "so-called intellectual," a member of the pseudo-intelligentsia, a "would-be culture vulture," and other *soi-disant* appellations. A climate is created in which even our cultural leaders are proud to boast of their low brows; perhaps they feel it is necessary if they want to keep their reputations as good, orthodox Catholics.

Whatever the reasons for this monolithic pattern of thought, and on all kinds of questions which are certainly open to discussion and disagreement, the impression is abroad that a) there is such a pattern and b) that the pattern is somehow a product of Catholic tradition and doctrine. I doubt that the pattern is as strict as the reader of the Catholic press may sometimes gather, and I am positive from observation of Catholic life in Europe that there is no necessary link between Catholic doctrine and some of the outstanding characteristics of Catholic life in the US.

Now, during this great national debate, which must necessarily be something of a worldwide debate since the peace of the whole world may be at stake, I think it is a good thing that there is disagreement in the Catholic press on the MacArthur issue. It is a good thing that the *Osservatore Romano* article and editorial were widely reported. I don't think that should be a question of crowing for those of us who support Truman, or of annoyed explaining-away for the MacArthur partisans. *L'Osservatore* puts up a case for Truman; so do *America* and *THE COMMONWEAL*; the majority of the diocesan papers are arguing for MacArthur.

Read them all and then make up your own mind.

JOHN COGLEY.

# The MacArthur Argument

The General has summarized some of the most important issues confronting the nation.

By HAROLD C. HINTON

IT MAY DO NO harm to throw one more faggot on the blaze of controversy lighted by the dismissal of General MacArthur and by his superb rhetorical effort before Congress. Quite apart from its merits as oratory, the speech was a clear summary of his views on some of the most important issues now confronting the United States, and it therefore deserves analysis.

The General began by saying that the challenge of Communism must be met both in Europe and Asia. The peoples of Asia, he continued, are in the throes of a vast revolution against foreign domination and against their "pitifully low" standard of living. "What they seek now is friendly guidance, understanding and support, not imperious direction." This is undeniably true; the difficulty is that the policies advocated by General MacArthur would be regarded by almost all the peoples of Asia as a flagrant example of imperious direction.

He then described the dominant position in the Pacific which the United States gained during the Second World War and recommended, "as a matter of military urgency, that under no circumstances must Formosa fall under Communist control. Such an eventuality would at once threaten the freedom of the Philippines and the loss of Japan and might well force our western frontier back to the coast of California, Oregon and Washington." Here the general was demolishing a straw man of his own invention. No responsible American official, to my knowledge, has advocated turning Formosa over to the Chinese Communists. Even if it were turned over to them, however, the terrible results predicted by General MacArthur are not likely to follow. A glance at a map should convince anyone that Formosa's chief usefulness as a base is against the China coast, not against the Philippines or Japan. The Japanese held Formosa for fifty years, but the island did them little good during the Second World War. It was mainly their control of the Marianas, Carolines, and Marshalls, which we now hold, in addition to their over-all naval and

military superiority to us in the Western Pacific, which enabled them to isolate and conquer the Philippines after Pearl Harbor. General MacArthur himself bypassed Formosa in the course of his drive toward Tokyo. As he pointed out in his speech, "No amphibious force can be successful without control of the sea lanes and the air over those lanes;" a Chinese Communist base on Formosa could easily be dominated by hostile air and sea forces stationed in the Philippines and the Ryukyus. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that General MacArthur overestimates the strategic importance of Formosa, and that his concern for its safety is prompted mainly by his friendship for Chiang Kai-shek.

The General then gazed with somewhat clouded vision at China's recent history. "China up to fifty years ago," he stated, "was completely non-homogenous, being compartmented into groups divided against each other. The warmaking tendency was almost nonexistent as they still followed the tenets of the Confucian ideal of pacifist culture." I have spent the last five years studying modern Chinese history, but I cannot recognize in General MacArthur's self-contradictory description the country which I have been studying. China's Taiping Rebellion, which cost some twenty million lives, was the bloodiest war fought anywhere in the world during the nineteenth century, and the annals of the last years of the Manchu dynasty are drenched with the blood shed in countless other wars and rebellions.

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NEXT THE GENERAL pointed to the tide of Chinese nationalism which has risen in the twentieth century and which has now been turned to the advantage of Communist expansion. Paradoxically, he added that the masses of the Chinese people care little for ideologies and want only a better life. The key to this paradox, which has apparently escaped the General, is the fact that the people of China have become politically aroused, and have proved their new-found strength by overthrowing the oppressive Kuomintang and substituting the Communists, who, for all their faults, at least understand the need for popular support and have done much to advance the cause of popular welfare. In defiance of an

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enormous mass of evidence, the General attributes this titanic revolution to "malicious gossip which so undermined the strength of its [the Kuomintang's] leadership on the Chinese mainland." General Wedemeyer, who understood the Kuomintang much better than does General MacArthur, and who has never been accused of pro-Communist sympathies, stated in his report of 1947, which was kept secret for two years by the State Department, that:

The Chinese Government is headed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and dominated by the Kuomintang under his leadership. The reactionary character of Kuomintang leadership, the repressive nature of its rule and the widespread corruption among Government officials and military officers have cost the Government heavily in terms of the confidence and support of the people. There is a widespread belief that under present conditions, unless the National Government takes drastic measures of reform, it will, through a slow and gradual process, disintegrate.

The reforms never came, but the Communists did, much sooner than General Wedemeyer, or General MacArthur, expected.

General MacArthur thereupon proceeded to paint an overly optimistic picture of the condition of the two nations in which most of his life's work has been done, Japan and the Philippines. His own rule in Japan, he said, has "created a truly representative government committed to the advance of political morality, freedom of economic enterprise and social justice." It is regrettable that he should claim virtual perfection for an administration which is remarkable and unique, but which has not accomplished the miracles which he attributes to it. The present chaos and corruption in the Philippines, so clearly described in the report of the Bell Mission, he dismissed as "existing unrest" which "will be corrected," he does not say how.

He then praised the Nationalist Government on Formosa, saying that "The Formosan people are receiving a just and enlightened administration with majority representation on the organs of government, and politically, economically and socially they appear to be advancing along sound and constructive lines." It is true that the almost unbelievable oppression and corruption with which the Nationalists ruled Formosa after they first entered it in the wake of Allied victory over Japan have been largely eliminated. The Formosans now appear to accept the Nationalist regime, but they would prefer independence, a privilege which almost everyone apparently wishes to deny them.

President Truman's decision to intervene in Korea the General pronounced as militarily

sound. He repeated his earlier assertion that the entry of the Chinese Communists "created a new war and an entirely new situation," but failed to mention that he had based his strategy on the assumption that they would not intervene. Then, on the assumption that the Soviet Union will not follow the example of Red China, he made his recommendations, calling for an economic and naval blockade, air reconnaissance and the use of Nationalist troops against the mainland.

These measures, in General MacArthur's opinion, would bring the war in Korea to an end without spreading it to China. I must confess that this type of "limited war" against the mainland of Communist China seems to me almost certain to lead to an unlimited war and to the committing of American ground troops to the Chinese mainland, a step which the general disclaims any desire to see undertaken. Any such measures would give Mao Tse-tung a pretext for invoking the Sino-Soviet mutual-defense alliance of February 14, 1950.

General MacArthur said that the Soviet Union would not intervene unless it believed that "the relativity in military or other potential is in its favor on a world-wide basis." This is probably true, but there is a strong possibility that American involvement in a war against the Chinese mainland, however limited, might alter the relativity in favor of the Soviet Union, or might be interpreted by the Soviet Union as so altering it. When the Chinese Communists warned us not to cross the 38th parallel many Americans, including the writer of this article, thought they were bluffing; on the basis of what happened then, I am not disposed to accept the proposition that the treaty quoted above is a bluff.

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GENERAL MacArthur's recommendations, it seems to me, must be rejected, on the ground that they are extremely dangerous and are founded on an inadequate understanding of Far Eastern political realities and popular psychology. The only feasible course appears to me to be the one recommended by President Truman, Secretary Acheson, and General Bradley. We must concentrate our strength on winning a local victory in Korea, with the aim of compelling the enemy to accept some sort of just and honorable settlement. We must accept unpleasant losses in the hope of escaping disastrous ones. We must avoid any action which would tend to enlarge the scope of the war: if we should take the initiative in spreading the war, we should lose most of what support we have among the other non-Communist nations of the world, and incur the risk of precipitating a Third World War with the Soviet Union.

## Anglo-American Relations

SOME little time back THE COMMONWEAL remarked editorially that "the battle for Europe requires of the United States a far better public-relations job than she has produced up to now." I am sure that is true so far as Great Britain is concerned; though it must not be overlooked that a number of Americans are doing a first-class job in the field of what might be called unofficial public relations.

At the highest level, Herbert Agar's name stands first; his *The United States: the Presidents, the Parties, and the Constitution* has recently been published over here, and is being widely read. A close second is Henry Steele Commager, whose *American Mind*, which we also now have, appeals as well to those to whom politics are rather deep water. It would, too, be difficult to over-praise the quiet work of the British-American Associates. It is many years since I first heard their organizer and principal lecturer, Professor Arthur Newell, speak about his country, at Bristol, so much of whose prosperity is due to Virginia tobacco; it made a deep impression, and I have never forgotten some of the points he made. Then, with the biggest and most varied audience, there is Alistair Cooke, who gives us a 15-minute Letter from America every week on the Home service of the BBC. And does he do it well!

Now an outstanding thing that distinguishes these men, and so many others, is a deep sense of responsibility. And it is lack of that that is so calculated to bedevil Anglo-American relations.

We have just had a howling example of such a lack in Mr. Millard Caldwell who, we are told, is the head of the United States civil-defense organization. He is reported as saying in London: "You will find that your people will take atomic bombs just like they took the others."

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FIRST of all, that is defeatist. He used the future indicative *will*, instead of the subjunctive *would*. It may have been a slip. But public men must not make slips of that kind. So far as the people of Great Britain are concerned a prominent American, in a most responsible position, has gone on record that he takes it for granted the war is coming.

Secondly, his observation was tactless, smug and patronizing. We know—and Mr. Caldwell can't know—just how near we sometimes were to the breaking-point between 1939 and 1945; and we do not pretend to know what atomic bombs would do to us. Some Britishers reacted with the remark that they would be interested

to know just how the American civil population would face bombs, atomic or other. That reaction was bitter and unjust. But such remarks as Mr. Caldwell's provoke such rejoinders.

He was not only defeatist and tactless: he was plain silly. For he is reported also to have said that atomic bombing "does not mean disaster at all." Then just why were such bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Why are the United States and the USSR making them as fast as they can? And what is this civil-defense expert's idea of a disaster?

In spite of radio and the newsprint famine, ordinary people in this country still tend to get their opinions and prejudices with the help of the newspapers. Thousands of people who have never heard of Professor Commager or Mr. Agar, who never listen to Alistair Cooke, read about Mr. Caldwell. And they were pretty angry. And disturbed. "Will find . . . will take" stuck in their gullets. "Do these Americans want war?"

The lawyers have a saying that "Not only must justice be done; it must be *seen* to be done." Of course the Americans don't want war; but that is not always so plainly to be seen over here as it should be. Too many things are said or printed by Americans, and brought to our notice, that suggest that the United States would not be averse, sooner or later, to a showdown by violence.

That is only a modified form of what the Communists want the world to believe. And that more than anything else is what would destroy confidence between the British and American peoples. I wrote something about the British attitude to war in this column on September 15 last year, and some readers did not like it. Disliking it won't alter the facts. And the significance of the fact that a book reviewer, in an English Catholic newspaper, could recently refer to "the dark rapture of war as it can lift a man into awareness of beauty," is that romantic superstitions about war die hard—and that some people can believe anything.

★

BUT we had hardly fetched our breath after damning Mr. Caldwell's performance than the news broke of the appointment of an American admiral to command the North Atlantic naval forces—and with it broke a storm in both houses of Parliament. Reactions cut across party lines, and the warm feeling displayed took the Prime Minister by surprise—as well it might.

No doubt what was said was fully reported in the American press; and maybe the impression was given that there is a general reaction against the appointment in Great Britain. There may be: but it is not unanimous. Clearly, as Mr. Churchill said, nobody is going to argue that he is hostile to the United States. But there are plenty of people who regard his questions and observations as a rather mischievous appeal to patriotic sentiment and national prestige, indirectly derogatory to the United States: when what is required is to ascertain whether this appointment is, or is not, in accordance with actual requirements and conducive to the common good.

The indignation of Mr. Churchill and those who agree

with him loosed a lot of rhetoric which was calculated neither to enhance the dignity of my country nor to benefit Anglo-American relations. Of three newspaper editorials before me, the Liberal one is quiet and pained: it believes that an impregnable case for a non-British commander is not forthcoming. The second, independent politically, deplores the affair as unnecessary, "because the appointment may wound British pride, it is not in any way a threat to our strategic security." The other, a Conservative paper, windily criticizes Attlee, makes its genuflection to Churchill, and affirms that anti-American feeling in England is confined to a small minority in the Labor Party. That is untrue; vague anti-American prejudice is frequently to be met among Conservatives, and prejudice of the sort that will be fed by these appeals to British naval history, whose facts no one denies and which are, in themselves, irrelevant.

The answers to a question, and the audience's reception thereof, in a radio "Any Questions?" program probably give a fair guide to general reactions in this matter. According to these, a large number of people want it decided only by practical considerations of here-and-now efficiency, without reference to whether the naval commander appointed be British, American, or Malagasy, or to who sunk how many submarines; a rather larger, and much noisier, number want a British admiral for the job, and support their views by an appeal to "Rule, Britannia." Of course I do not suggest that all Mr. Churchill's supporters in this matter are as simple-minded as that.

It may well be that this naval appointment was insufficiently discussed and thought out. But the way many of its critics opposed it is another example of irresponsibility; and the reported comments of the *N. Y. Times* and *Herald-Tribune* were admirably patient and understanding.

DONALD ATTWATER.

### Appeals

JACQUES MARITAIN informs us that Véronique, the eldest daughter of the French Catholic writer Léon Bloy, is now seriously ill and in urgent need of material support. A group of admirers of Léon Bloy is busy getting means to help her. Those who would like to participate in this effort may send contributions to:

M. Albert Beguin  
27 rue Jacob  
Paris 6e  
France

SISTER LEONARDA MARIA of Louvain, Belgium appeals on behalf of a convent in Erfurt, Russian Zone, Germany where "the Sisters are very poor. They have the care of many children and poor people in the convent. They do not have enough to eat or to keep themselves and all who live with them properly clothed."

Reverend Mother Simon Petra  
Marienshilf  
Erfurt  
Russian Zone  
Germany

## THE LABOR MOVEMENT

### After Sixty Years

DOWN AT the Catholic Worker in the old days Peter Maurin's French accent did strange things to words like "encyclical." He had one talk whose title came out "Making the Encyclicks Click." I have forgotten how it went though I imagine that few of us would agree with all the details of his method for popularizing the Popes. Nevertheless, it would be a fine thing if more of us had Peter's single-minded devotion to the cause.

May 15 will mark the twentieth anniversary of Pius XI's great encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (On the Reconstruction of the Social Order). It will also mark the sixtieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, the trail-blazing letter of Leo XIII. This is therefore a big day and it is only right that the Catholic world should celebrate it and pause for at least a few minutes to consider its significance.

When Marx and Engels wrote "The Communist Manifesto" in 1848 there was one great bishop who stood out on the Continent as a champion of the workingman. That was the German bishop, Von Ketteler. I will always remember his defense of trade unionism and the splendid line, "The air is still God's air though breathed by an atheist." And unions, he went on, are still the natural God-given means by which men may raise themselves above the dust, even though they may be used and abused by wild-eyed revolutionaries.

But in those years most Catholic bishops in Europe were not so enlightened. Those were the years when the working class was being lost to the Church. It was 1891, after most of the damage had been done, that the Pope himself came out and threw the full weight of his authority behind the thesis of Von Ketteler.

★

BY THIS time, however, the Socialists and Communists had been given such a headstart that they had been able to seize control of most of the labor organizations then in existence on the Continent and turn them into instruments of propaganda and education for a highly anti-clerical Marxism. It was almost impossible for a believing Catholic to belong to such organizations without danger to his faith.

Because of this Leo XIII favored the organization of Catholic unions as a counter-measure. In *Rerum Novarum* he says, "Workers associations ought to be so constituted and so governed as to furnish the most suitable and most convenient means to attain the object proposed, which consists in this, that the individual members of the association secure, so far as is possible, an increase

in the goods of body, of soul and of property." He also said that "moral and religious perfection ought to be regarded as their principal goal, and that their social organization as such ought above all to be directed completely by this goal."

In areas where there was a solidly Catholic working-class there is no question that the Catholic union had advantages over a purely neutral, non-sectarian union. But the difficulty was that the mistakes of the past had made such areas more and more rare. The Catholic workers were too often an impotent minority, especially when they were huddled into their own minority unions and unable to reach the great undecided masses who more and more went with the Left Wingers. It is significant that while the sons of the Church usually put "Catholic" or "Christian" into their titles, the Marxists almost never put an ideological tag on their unions, but simply called them by such all-embracing names as "General Confederation of Labor" and made it as easy as possible for anyone and everyone to come into their parlor.

The difference was that Marxism was an expanding, aggressive, confident faith. And at that time Catholicism was on the defensive, not expanding but contracting, harried and fearful, not confident either of the loyalty or the energy of its children.

By 1931, when Pius XI put his signature to *Quadragesimo Anno*, several things had become evident. One was that a strictly Catholic, or even Christian, union labored under serious handicaps in a mixed population. Another was that the temper of those Catholic workers who had remained loyal was changing. Thanks to the magnificent work of men like Father Cardijn and the JOC (Young Christian Workers) there was growing up on the Continent again a generation of proletarian apostles. These young men did not so much need a citadel behind whose crenelated towers they could cower from the onslaughts of the Marxist revolutionaries. What they needed, and wanted, were opportunities to go forth into the wide and open plain to meet the enemy, and all the spectators, on an equal footing. They knew that given only a fair shake they could, with God's help, be confident of besting the most formidable disciples of the gospel according to St. Karl.

★

**S**TILL another thing that had become apparent was that in Anglo-Saxon countries like England and America, Marxism had not been able to take over the labor movements and there had grown up a type of unionism which could honestly be called "neutral" toward religion.

Pius XI nowhere says that Leo XIII was wrong in his emphasis on the Catholic union. Far from it. He simply explains that there are times and places "where either the laws of a country, or certain special economic institutions, or that deplorable dissension of minds and hearts, so widespread in contemporary society, and an urgent necessity of combating with united purpose and strength the massed ranks of revolutionists, have prevented Catholics from founding purely Catholic labor unions."

"Under these conditions," he went on, "Catholics seem

almost forced to join secular labor unions . . . It is clearly the office of bishops, when they know that these associations are on account of circumstances necessary and are not dangerous to religion, to approve of Catholic workers joining them, keeping before their eyes, however, the principles and precautions laid down by Our Predecessor, Pius X of holy memory."

What are these principles and precautions that the saintly Pius X laid down on September 24, 1912, in his encyclical *Singulari Quadam*? Pius XI mentions one of them: "Among these precautions the first and chief is this: side by side with these unions there should always be associations zealously engaged in imbuing and forming their members in the teaching of religion and morality so that they in turn may be able to permeate the unions with that good spirit which should direct them in all their activity. As a result, the religious associations will bear good fruit even beyond the circle of their own membership."

Note the positive, missionary quality of that last sentence. It must have occurred to the Pope that such a statement could rarely be made of a Catholic union.

★

**T**HIS IS not my principal point, however. What I would like to call attention to is the fact that today, twenty years after Pius XI wrote these words and almost forty after Pius X defined this "first and foremost precaution," there are only a dozen dioceses doing anything about the plan.

We have not done much about the Pope's urgings to speed the day when workers will become "sharers in ownership or management or participate in some fashion in the profits received." And when I say "we" I include those of us on the labor side as well as those on the management side and the millions in between.

Pius XI wrote: ". . . let all strive according to the talent, powers and position of each to contribute something to the Christian reconstruction of human society . . . seeking not themselves and their own interests, but those of Jesus Christ; not trying to press at all costs their own counsels, but ready to sacrifice them, however excellent, if the greater common good should seem to require it, so that in all and above all Christ may reign."

In general it might be said that the Popes have done their part. As far as doctrine goes there should be no doubt where the Church stands, at least among those who take the trouble to read. But the terrible part of it is that doctrine lives, or dies, or is betrayed, or is perverted, by the actions of every man who stands before the world bearing the name of Catholic. Leo XIII and Pius XI, true fathers of the poor, wrote their encyclical letters and fulfilled their obligations to the truth and went to their reward. God grant that those of us who commemorate those letters may somehow find the wit and the will to give them meaning and reality for the men of our time.

JOHN C. CORT.

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# The Stage

## GRAMERCY GHOST

**J**OHN CECIL HOLM has, unluckily, written a comedy without a situation. He has a vague sort of premise—a Revolutionary War ghost continues to haunt a Gramercy Park apartment—but no complication for it, no unexpected relationship between the ghost and such humans as turn up; the ghost provokes these characters—a girl, her fiance, a reporter—to little more than a variety of double-takes before he finally goes his own amiable and rather tedious way, and the author is hard put to it for comic incident. His rushing in of extraneous characters—a policeman, several Bellevue attendants, and the like—and his involving them in frantic and random misunderstandings does nothing to prevent the curtain from coming down unusually early and the audience from wishing it had been earlier. The characters themselves are never anything more than stock types, so that the evening has very little to go on and its poverty is not long concealed.

That it is concealed even momentarily is due to an efficient and likable performance by Sarah Churchill, and an easy and ingratiating one by Robert Sterling. Nor is there anything much wrong with Raymond Sovey's set or Reginald Denham's stage direction. The production is, in fact, remarkably assured for a vehicle which all concerned must have known to be flimsy and unpromising. (*At the Morosco*)

## THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

**I** AM sorry to report that City Center's "Shrew" is both the poorest Margaret Webster production, and the poorest professional production of this particular play, that I have ever seen. Aside from a certain vitality in the Christopher Sly episodes, the performance is physical without being funny and loud without being especially intelligible. Miss Webster's difficulties in this case seem to stem from her casting: Claire Luce's snarling of Kate is without authority or humor, in all an extraordinarily vulgar performance; and Ralph Clanton's Petruchio, while much better acted, is straight leading-man stuff in a part which calls for a little more bite and a lot more eccentricity. Miss Webster has also been moved to incorporate snatches of Cole Porter's "Kiss Me, Kate" score and to have her actors labor over such lines as have been made familiar by Sam and Bella Spewack, a practice which seems to me not only coy but apologetic. It suggests, in effect, that the play is without interest of its own and that it can be managed nowadays if it is turned into a self-conscious trick. The play isn't a great one, but it has a lot of vitality for a beat-up old pot-boiler, and I wish that it had been given its due. In any event, the trickery only accents the director's lack of confidence in it.

Ben Edward's functional setting seemed to me not to function very well. A spindly silhouette provided with reversible doors to suggest change of locale, its outlines were so emphatic and distracting as to cancel out the smaller suggestions of change, and it tended to become an object lesson in how little, rather than how much, can be suggested by an adaptable unit. Of the many performances, I thought only Larry Gates as Christopher Sly and Frederic Warriner as a Tailor made their moments on stage independently interesting. (*At City Center*)

## THE LONG DAYS

**D**AVIS SNOW'S short-lived melodrama provided Frances Starr with one of those elongated parts which is all demand and no return. Onstage throughout the evening, and asked to dominate every turn of the narrative, the actress was forced to draw upon her own resources endlessly without ever arriving at a big or honestly-written scene provided by the author. This was workhorse activity, with no hay in the barn; and I am afraid that it also indicates the limitations of Mr. Snow's talent. He is enough of a workman to be able to construct a play, and enough of a writer to be able to supply the necessary lines. But, in the course of his work, he never stumbles on anything juicy, never reaps any unexpected benefit from having put the gears in motion. He can only labor his way along, more or less reasonably, until the final scene, when, in the absence of inspiration or tension, he must resort to mechanical violence to get his curtain down. The result is a good imitation of a play, but not a play.

I thought Jeffrey Lynn satisfactory enough in the sullen and underwritten part of Miss Starr's most put-upon son, and Neva Patterson, Katharine Bard, and Ralph Theadore all considerably superior to their materials. (*Closed at the Empire*) **WALTER KERR.**

# The Screen

## LOTS OF SHADOWS, LITTLE SUBSTANCE

**S**OMETIMES I wonder why Hollywood bothers with biographical movies at all. The scriptwriters are so limited as to what can be said, especially if the central characters are still living, and the exigencies of plot make such rigid requirements, that life would be simpler for the writers and movies would be better for the audience if the studios would stick to fiction. But no! In spite of the foreword that precedes so many biographical films ("The events, characters, and firms depicted in this photoplay are fictitious, etc.") Hollywood goes on and on turning out movies that are supposedly based on real lives.

If you don't expect too much in the way of plot and

if you'd like to see and hear a movie whose main asset is a series of gems from operas, *"The Great Caruso"* should be right up your alley. As a movie it is interminably long and static; and its story has only a suggestion of the problems complicating the life of the man who is generally considered the world's greatest singer. Starting with scenes in Italy, where most of the characters speak in a sort of vaudeville Italian dialect and where young Enrico was greatly impressed with his mother's instructions that he must use the gift that God gave him, the plot reveals Caruso's struggles to become a singer, his rise in Europe and then his early discouragement in America. The picture takes on a little feeling when Caruso insists on singing not for the critics but for the people in the gallery. And the plot moves forward a little when the singer meets and marries Dorothy Benjamin (Ann Blyth) in spite of her father's opposition. In the title role Mario Lanza looks the part and sings it beautifully. No one actually expects him to *be* Caruso, but for the present he's an acceptable substitute. Teamed with many fine singers like Dorothy Kirsten and Blanche Thebom, Mr. Lanza offers the standard repertory from "Aida" to "Rigoletto." You really won't learn a lot about Caruso the man, but Lanza may draw a sentimental tear with his singing.

★

**I** DOUBT if Anthony Dexter as *"Valentino"* will win either a tear or a burst of bravos. This assignment to portray the famous Latin lover of the silent movies would have been a difficult one for even an actor of great skill. Mr. Dexter bears a facial and physical resemblance to Valentino, but to expect him to emote as Rudolph did in the old days is too much. Furthermore much of Valentino's appeal was due to the animal magnetism that made him the popular idol. Mr. Dexter doesn't have it, so he can hardly be blamed for conveying so little of the silent star's attraction. I'm not exactly sure that the Valentino story is worth all this fuss, but in any case the script, as written with a lot of pedestrian dialogue and implausible situations by George Bruce, doesn't do much to cover up Dexter's ineptitude as an actor. Since so many of the facts had to be disguised, the plot might have given us some good scenes dealing with picture making in the twenties but even these are rather garbled. One's sympathies go out to the cast, including such attractive actresses as Eleanor Parker and Patricia Medina, as they plod through the corn. Perhaps this film's conclusion is correct about the Valentino legend living on and on; but the film itself will do as much to kill it as anything.

★

**A** QUITE unusual kind of biographical picture is *"Follow the Sun"* which offers the story of Ben Hogan, the golf player who rose through hard work to be champion, later suffered an accident which required a year's convalescence, and then returned to be champion again. Actually this is a super-success story, and athletically-minded audiences should lap it up. In spite of

Director Sidney Lanfield's efforts to get motion into his film, it has a curious static quality, due no doubt to the fact that only so much can be done with golf in a movie. There are excellent sequences showing the games, but after awhile they have a sameness that detracts from their suspense. Another point that makes this an unusual biographical film is its hero's personality. You have about as much chance of warming up to Hogan, the man, as you have of cherishing an ice cube. Glenn Ford plays the role exceedingly well; and Anne Baxter is excellent as Mrs. Hogan, but not until the last third of the picture, when Ben courageously learns to walk and play golf again, does the drama begin to work on our emotions. Admirers of those two great American sports, golf and success, however, will be in their glory as they follow the sun with Ben and Valerie Hogan.

★

**M**OVIEGOERS who prefer their films to be fictional and thoughtful should consider *"The First Legion"* which is a mixture of both. I became so engrossed in the first half of this picture that I was sure it was going to be one of the big cinematic events of the year. But the scenes outside of the Jesuit seminary, particularly those involving the crippled girl who seems to think that God owes her a miracle, get so involved in dripping sentiment that they detract from the picture's main theme. Since Emmet Lavery wrote the script for this movie from his play, I suppose the changes are his own, but it is hard to understand how he let his tight, compact drama go so far asprawling over the lot. However, everyone knows that there is many a step from the start of a movie to its final editing. Perhaps it would be impossible to say who is responsible for the sugar-coated last half of the picture as it now stands.

But in spite of these flaws, *"The First Legion"* is a thought-provoking movie and one that will be of special interest to Catholics. The scenes in the seminary where the false miracle occurs are fascinating to watch and are expertly acted by Charles Boyer as the priest whose suspicions of the "miracle" are later justified and by Leo G. Carroll, Walter Hampden, Wesley Addy, H. B. Warner and Taylor Holmes as other Jesuits. The frank discussions among these priests, their attitudes toward the supposed miracle that draws hundreds of pilgrims who look not to medicine for cure but to Blessed Joseph, and the whole religious atmosphere of this Jesuit seminary are portrayed with an unvarnished sincerity that American movies seldom display toward things religious. I'm sorry that the film as a whole doesn't keep up this high standard. Perhaps Producer-director Douglas Sirk, who handled the seminary scenes so well, felt that the movie had to have a girl and some love interest to attract audiences. Although these episodes built up around the girl and the doctor (played by Barbara Rush and Lyle Bettger without a full understanding of the real problems involved) weaken the movie, they do not overshadow the film's more solid substance that faith is the real miracle.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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# Of Note

## *The Asian Crisis*

FORDHAM University's quarterly *Thought* marked its 25th anniversary with the current issue. An article by Charles Malik, delegate from Lebanon to the United Nations, is prefaced with an introduction by the author in which he says: "It will always be necessary to place the problems and destiny of Asia in a long-term perspective. . . . The weakness and exposedness of Asia will be such a source of danger to the peace of the world that everything must be done to help Asia attain a fine measure of strength and health and independence." The following excerpt is the conclusion of Dr. Malik's article "Appeal to Asia":

There are appalling conditions of privation and poverty throughout Asia. So long as Moscow means, truly or falsely, hope for the masses, and the Western world does not mean so with the same clarity, it is idle to speak of peaceful coexistence or of live-and-let-live. There is in this regard an unequal appeal to the suffering masses of mankind as between, for example, Moscow and Washington. Communism will then sprout from within, or at least the internal situation will be so softened as to prepare the ground for the easy march of Communism from without. The British Commonwealth of Nations has endeavored in the recent Colombo Conference boldly to meet this situation. President Truman's Point Four is a response to the same need. I might remark in this connection that, in my opinion, the present magnitude of operations of the Point Four program must be multiplied by about one hundred times before it can begin to be adequate for the crying needs of the moment. . . .

The balance of mind is in a sense the most important task. For a man, no matter how weak or poor, will be exceedingly strong and rich if only he has an idea for which he can die and therefore for which he can live. Communism provides such an idea. The Communists have a purpose in life beyond their immediate cares and worries. The non-Communist world does not have such a sense of mission. There is, therefore, an unequal intellectual struggle between it and the Communist world. So long as this is the case, peaceful coexistence must remain a pious hope. For there will always be an uneasy tension in the minds of men afflicted with the widespread malady of purposelessness. They will always feel they are unjustly cheated of something—the unifying and liberating sense of purpose.

The source of this agonizing injustice is that the Western world does not believe strongly enough in

the importance and power of ideas. In many instances, Western man is too much wrapped up in himself, in his own self-pity, his own self-worry and petty little problems. He does not sufficiently rest in joy on the marvelous vision of truth—an objective and independent truth throbbing with life and meaning and salvation.

The ideal of taking a college degree, getting married and settled, rearing a family, having a dependable job, making lots of money, and having a comfortable and ever-expanding bank account, this ideal conceived purely in these terms is not good enough. It is, if I may say so, a very timid ideal. It is not dangerous enough. It does not answer to man's deepest hunger for truth and community, where going out of oneself is a joy and where it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Confronted with this ideal alone, Asia is not impressed. In fact, despite all her darkness and misery, Asia can still do better. And an Asian who knows something of the highest values which have characterized the Western positive tradition at its best can turn to the West and say, "You can do much better also."

If the thirsty souls of honest seeking men throughout the world are going to be satisfied, a mighty living true faith must be discovered or created to balance the militant faith of Communism. Pure nationalism will always be handicapped by reason of its particularism, whereas the need in this physically unified world is for something just as universal as Communism but infinitely more profound and true. He does not know the infinite positive hidden riches of the non-Communist world in Asia, in Europe and in America, who does not believe that such a faith can be released in it.

The present crisis is therefore a great opportunity. It will call forth deep searchings of heart which must lead to the finding of adequate spiritual answers. For too long have we buried and shelved our ultimate values; for too long have we been distracted from them by lesser things. The day of reckoning has come, when we can no longer afford the luxury of living in the plains but must rise to the heights, where once again the gods can speak to men. The tribulation of the days to come will bring upon men a fresh visitation of destiny, the purification of the heart which comes from contact with the ultimate and awful. And in the East and West alike our spiritual and intellectual leaders will seek new dimensions, and they will find them. They will ask, Is it true that Marxism is the final dispensation that has cancelled and absorbed all that we have known for thousands of years to be true and good and noble and ultimate? And they will bless the names of Marx and Lenin, not indeed for what they said and did and meant, but for having roused us from our slumber and forced us to inquire after our good and return to our God.

# Stephen Spender

By ANNE FREMANTLE

THE French call Stephen Spender "ce Shelley," and the tall, sensitive, cavernous poet looks, indeed, like what might have been seen plain by all the world, had Shelley reached middle age and maturity.

Born in 1909, bracketed with W. H. Auden as a poet of the thirties, Stephen Spender has, since 1935, published mainly prose. His first book, *Twenty Poems*, published in 1930, while he was still at Oxford, established him as a writer; the publication of *Poems*, in 1933, established him as a literary lion. "I began," he writes, "to lead a literary-social life of luncheons, teas, and week-ends at country houses." The Spanish War arrested his development as a Communist. Since his experiences in Spain he has become increasingly less political. He has come nearer to Wilfred Owen's position, that "the poetry is in the pity," not in the doctrine or the dogma.

He is as truly representative of his generation as it is possible to be. Middle-class, middle-aged, with this autobiography (*World Within World*. Harcourt. \$3.50) he speaks for the mid-century as only an English liberal, with a German-Jewish mother and a Russian wife, could do. This is all our document, we who were born just before or during World War I, who survived World War II, and who, as far as can possibly be foreseen, will perish in World War III. It is as universal a statement of the *Zeitgeist* as Goethe or Henry Adams ever made; and it is the most totally "engaged" statement made in our time—as poetic as Rilke, as prophetic as Kafka, as guilty as Gide. And for all that it is a 'presentment of Englishry,' confused, sentimental, dichotomous, woolly. It is supremely Christian and European in its certainty that "I am I," that "it is the individual who accepts the responsibility of his own complexity" and that "within even a good social cause, there is a duty to fight for the preeminence of individual conscience," and that the individual "must not be swallowed up by the concept of social man."

★

"I DO NOT want," Stephen Spender states in his preface, "my behavior to appear attractive or fashionable," nor does he wish to offer a consoling picture of himself as having arrived beyond the breakers, into a life-begins-at-forty peace, having "survived my life like a grave illness." His parents seem to have failed singularly to provide any of their young with love. Stephen's mother appears as a hysterical invalid, standing, Medea-like, at the nursery door when the children played trains, exclaiming, "I now know the sorrow of

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having borne children." His father "turned everything into rhetorical abstraction," whether it was fighting elections with his children in a donkey-cart, a placard round the donkey's neck saying "Vote for Daddy," or exclaiming, "My little ones, you are all your old father has left" when faced with his offspring after their mother's death. Stephen's uncle, J. A. Spender, sometime editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, was kindly, worldly, and famous for his balanced point of view. By the time Stephen was aware of him, the uncle was nearly seventy and the act of balancing "had become rather automatic." He was the core and center of the cocoon of meliorism in which the young Spenders were swaddled, for lack of affection.

Around them was a belief in progress "curiously mingled with apprehension." In the past were tortures, Henry VIII's wives, the Boer War; in the present was history "fulfilled and finished by the static respectability, idealism, and material prosperity of the end of the nineteenth century." World War I had knocked the ball-room floor from under the English middle classes, yet, though people resembled dancers suspended in mid-air, they were "miraculously able to pretend they were still dancing." They sighed for the good old days, yet approved such new comforts as automobiles, the League of Nations, and the beginnings of Labor legislation.

Stephen Spender emphatically states that he is not going to talk of his childhood, that he has a horror of wading through pages of governesses and childish prattle. Yet he really never escapes, not the nursery but what happened there. There may be a moral alternative for war; there is none for love. And the "capital letter morality" that surrounded Stephen, the ethical ideas of Duty, Purity, Discipline, rightly horrified him, as much as later the cold cruelty of the Communists in the Spanish War.

Even the lovely intellectual delight in the company of such women as Virginia Woolf, Lady Ottoline Morrell and Rosamund Lehmann also failed to give him that sense of being grounded in "love that is root and fruit of terrene things." His life is a double struggle: to find in people, in the simplicity of family servants who gave him and his siblings what parents did not, in a completely sordid relationship with Jimmy, an unemployed ex-soldier, in an identification with his lower-class fellow-firefighters in the London blitz, that 'altar of earth' God has commanded us all to build Him, and knowing himself a poet, to distil what he must of significance from reality.

★

THERE is much that is revolting in his almost infinite capacity for being humiliated—a masochism which makes him exhibit his sores not merely brazenly but boringly. When his father was dying, he would not stoop to lace his shoes but once "very gently wiped his mouth" when he noticed a rust-colored froth of saliva on his lips. At twenty-two, "there was no one whom I could ask to travel with me or share a flat." On his wedding day, he boasts, he took time off to correct proofs—he still cannot read his name in print without emotion.

In Spain, when many of his friends were dying in the trenches, he was Rolls-Roycing around, sumptuously fed, trying to get his deserter boy-friend out of jail. And he despises Garcia Lorca as a coward!

His whole "Life with Jimmy" might be issued separately as a "shilling shocker." On the other hand, his analysis of the rise of Nazism from among the bronze sun-worshippers of Hamburg, is morally superb. He is at his best when he is being malicious—about Auden, clinically detached, watchfully squinting, smoking, eating and drinking enormous amounts of tea; about Christopher Isherwood, whose "sharp-angled eyebrows added to the impression of his being a strained school leader," eating toffee daily as a penance, in order to ruin his teeth; about Lady Ottoline Morrell, wearing creaking silks and satins and carrying a crook as she walked through the Bloomsbury squares or sailed through the London streets on a tram; about Ernest Hemingway acting the part of a Hemingway hero but seeing literature as "the unceasing inter-relationship of the words on the page with the life within and beyond them"; about T. S. Eliot proving to Spender that you cannot "be a poet" you can only write poetry, and that requires "the fullest attention of man during his lifetime."

★

AND he is superb when he writes about the 1937 Writers Congress in Madrid, to which he went as a delegate, visa-less, since the Foreign Office would not grant him one. A card-carrying forged-passport-owning Communist, Spender could not have disliked his fellow-travelers more. Yet André Malraux seems to have dominated Spender at 28, as Auden dominated him at 19. But he cannot love even him and that saved Spender from becoming interiorly totalitarian. For it is only when you love what humiliates you that you wholly accept the abdication of personal responsibility that the *Fuehrerprinzip* involves. And from that, Spender was saved—was it by his self-abnegating grandmother or those "saints of utterly simple purpose" who had put aside all evasion and lived for humanity, who had the power "to wash and shape the stone which was my heart?" By all these, and most of all by his own enduring intention to write the truth to which his existence bore witness: that, under all causes and all appearances, "there was an extreme simplicity, like that of a lost child, or a sick person."

Through the concentration camp of his childhood, the school that was more horrible than Cyril Connolly's Eton, through a university where he oversimplified his generation into hearties and aesthetes, and fancied himself enjoying a relationship between equals with Isaiah Berlin; through the "kind of sexual slum" in which he lived with D—, with Joachim and Willi, with Jimmy, and did not live with Caroline, Polly, Elizabeth, and his first wife, Inez, Stephen came to see that "direction is everything. The greatest of all human delusions is that there is a tangible goal, and not just direction towards an ideal aim."

HE ANALYZES not only his contemporaries, whether poets or prose-writers, but also the essence of poetry itself, the very core. The "thread which led me through the maze of poetic experiences," he writes, "to a truer sense of poetry, was the concern . . . with the single line." Crystallization of the image by such a line enabled the poet to feel his way beyond the vague sensation "to the exact image of the metaphor." For most writers, an experience is "the beginning of a journey where they soon arrive at already expressed ideas." The true poet reveals a fragment of the ultimate truth or his own loneliness; he clings to his own vision wherever it may seem to lead.

For Spender, the poet is a "translator of the world which man projects around him through the actions of his will, back into language of the inner life of dreams and fantasy which has projected this materialistic external actuality."

His fear of being an inadmissible, unrespectable kind of moral outcast, a fear impressed upon him by his parents, whose morality was based on a fear of discovering something horrible about others, or even about themselves, led him to want to love "what I judged to be the inadmissible worst qualities in myself." And this led both to a discipline, and to many guilts. Social guilt led him to become a Communist; in all his life, guilt was both the "stumbling darkness wherein we cannot act" and the thread leading "us out of a labyrinth into places where we accept, instead of being overwhelmed by, the responsibility of action."

All his poetry is the work of "an autobiographer restlessly searching for forms in which to express the stages of my development." And always he has searched for friendship, for identity and polarity in his relationships, either with men or women. In his relationships of identity with men, there was disillusionment as well as joy; he finds, looking back, that it was his relationships with women that were "the most enduring, because in the relationship of opposites there always remained the mystery of an unknown quantity."

Though he has retained the sense of child-like search, he seems to have totally by-passed that sense of wonder and delight at the very possibility of relationship—with things, with people, with oneself, with one's Maker, which makes Thomas Traherne cry out that "the corn was orient and immortal wheat, it stood from everlasting to everlasting," or the dying sage in Cicero's *De Senectute* bid his children reverence those "who guard and guide all this beauty."

Today's poet can no longer choose between politics and the ivory tower, if indeed he ever could. Nor is the poetry any longer, as Wilfrid Owen put it, "in the pity." Life cannot be seen whole except by the poet, such is the departmentalization required of journalists, novelists, biographers and essayists. The only universal left is the distilled inescapable of the poet, and that is why today they are almost infinitely precious in and to our society. Mr. Spender, in giving us so vulnerable and touching an account of the way one poet's mind and heart have grown, has performed a great service to life as well as to literature.

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# Books

*The Weight of the Cross.* Robert O. Bowen. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.50.

THE tidy ones are the easiest to write, and to write about. When the author has all the buttons buttoned you can feel the proper sentiments and say so. Such writing is respectable, but you know it's all out in the open.

There are some books (as there are poems, and above all, lives) that forsake the plains and go down into the swamps, the jungle. There, there are no straight lines. The shortest distance between two points is over the fallen trees, over the tangled, spongy islands.

*The Weight of the Cross* is a novel about a young Catholic sailor who, in December 1941, is in a psycho ward in the Philippines after having attempted to kill a martinet superior officer. When the Japanese attack, this bitter and maladjusted sailor escapes the hospital, is captured by the advancing Japanese, and spends the succeeding years as a prisoner of war. This experience brings the redemption of the sailor. Here is the jungle. The sailor, Tom Daley, is not redeemed as men are conventionally said to be redeemed. He is drawn deeper and deeper into violence, killing, physical suffering; and his redemption is a matter of reconciliation with the men whom he had despised and feared.

The author enlisted in the navy in 1937 after two and a half years of high school. He was with the Asiatic Fleet in North and South China and the Pacific islands for three years and was a Japanese prisoner of war on Luzon for three years. Since the war he has studied at the University of Alabama under Hudson Strode, and now teaches for the University's extension service in Birmingham. His first novel is a brilliant book.

The experience has been transferred to the novel with rationalization but without formulation. That is, Daley, the sailor, comprehends what has happened to him, but the

author has not ordered the experience. He can't have made an outline for this one. It is that way with a profound experience. It is too deep within one for cool organization. It comes out, as it did here, in a great rush. There is an interruption, a detailed telling of some incident, some death or struggle in the prison camp at Butai which has only limited significance. Then the great things rush out again. Mr. Bowen has to pause then and analyze what has happened. This is a failure, I suppose. The author has been overcome by his material. But in a work as deeply affecting as this one, and as brilliantly written, the technical difficulty is overridden.

EVERY man who has ever experienced the eight or fourteen or sixteen weeks of an army training cycle knows how life can be forcibly simplified. Even at the training station where there are Westerns on Saturday and GI beer on weeknights, an individual's circle of existence becomes smaller and smaller, until it includes a bed, and meals (how hungry a city-dweller becomes in his first weeks in the army!), and protection from the rain (rain, when it comes during bivouac, makes you believe that Hell itself must consist of wet boots and trousers, cold underwear, leaking tents, rusting rifles, and water-soaked bread and vegetables) and above everything else a few hours of freedom from the omnipresent whistle and the everlasting manhunt for work details. When the cycle is finished it all seems quite silly. You are ashamed to think of your griping when men are suffering infantry combat. You go home for a week of hot showers, food, sleep, and reading the *New Yorker*.

But you feel that you have had on your tongue a taste of life without leisure. That is a terrible thing because temporarily, at least, your rational, your recreational, your fashionable powers wither in disuse.

You know, as a man who has seen Jones Beach knows the Sahara, what life could be like as a peasant or a slave or a POW.

The young sailor of this novel is an heroic figure because the life of slavery did not destroy him. With profound authority the author tells how Daley becomes a coolie and by becoming a coolie becomes a mature man. Daley expresses part of it on the transport on the way to San Francisco:

"They had all shared living with him, the strong ones and the weak ones, the white and the Jap, and they all had a claim on him. Whatever they had done, right or wrong, he couldn't deny a deep and lasting bond with them. Even Marlin, the traitor, was close enough to him so that he felt no pleasure at knowing of Marlin's court-martial and the firing squad awaiting him. He had been ground through so much of the abrasive of life in the islands that now he felt only sorrow for the wrongs he saw instead of the hate he had once felt. He felt no maudlin need to tell anyone how much he had lost as the guys had passed out of his life. He felt only that each of them was part of him and that no telling was needed, as though telling would at least cheapen the thing and perhaps would mean that his loss was not real if he had to speak of it, to put it forth and demand its recognition.

"Now too, homeward bound, Tom felt another thing, a belief that had grown stronger in him as the transport steamed eastward. Back in the islands he had never let himself believe fully because someday fear alone might have come to seem the cause of his believing. But now alone on the boat deck belief rose slowly to the surface of his mind after glimmerings through all those years beneath, distorted there as any bright thing is distorted in any depth. Now he could accept the God he had denied through all his lone years and with Him he accepted the ancient reason for his own being that linked his father's time to his, that flowed in blood forever from father to son. He felt that he would never be alone again, that he would

always be one of many, one of all who live and die."

Daley vaguely recognizes that God is Charity, but as the book ends it is not the Jesus Christ of Catholicism who figures in his belief. He has simply found that he cannot live for himself. Now, having died in the person of fools and weaklings who had shared prison with him, he can't get interested in any apple-pie homecoming. He cannot hate the Americans who had betrayed their fellow POW's and worked for the Japanese. He simply has been into the swamp and knows that paths are not straight.

WILLIAM PFAFF.

*Red Storm Over Asia. Robert Payne. Macmillan. \$5.*

IN THESE days of the Communist triumph in China and the activities of Communist Fifth Columns in almost all the lands of Asia, any first-hand information is most welcome. Robert Payne lived for many years in Asiatic countries, as a teacher at Lienta University in Kunming, as an intelligence officer for the British Ministry of Information, and as a journalist for British papers. Under his own name and various pseudonyms Payne has published more than a dozen studies that show his wide background and his artistic appreciation for the arts of Asia, especially lyrical poetry. In his political judgment Payne has been inclined toward the Left. He is one of the authors who have failed to see the great influence of the Kremlin on the Communistic movements of Asia, and may still under-rate it even today.

In spite of this, Payne's new book is full of good observation on the happenings in China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaya, Vietnam, Burma, Iran and Iraq. It presents the original reflections of a man who has a sincere love for the old cultures of Asia and hates the thought that these nations should be brought back to a new kind of colonialism. He is very unhappy, therefore, that America supports fig-

ures like Bao Dai, whom he regards as a symbol of oppression, so much hated by his countrymen that he spends the greater part of the year away from Indo-China.

Though Payne may be too optimistic in his judgment of some of the Communist leaders and their own "national impulses," it is evident that his true sympathies are with those liberal national leaders who look for a third way between the extremes of white supremacy and Stalinist directives. His book is dedicated to Soetan Sjahrir, the great Indonesian leader, and to Thakin Nu of Burma. He stresses that these two leaders speak with the accent of occidental humanism and are really able to blend their national traditions with the best thought of the West. They have a feeling for human dignity that we miss in both the friends of the Kremlin and the friends of white supremacy.

Payne is convinced that the rise of the Asiatic nations cannot be overcome by mere military means, and that it is necessary for the West to offer these nations more help than the dictators of totalitarianism do. He fails to stress the fact that the West helped, unwittingly, to uproot the Asiatic nations from their old traditions, but he thinks that they still have a horror of atheism and this may possibly blend with the common feeling for human dignity. He thinks that our inability to speak in mythological terms, as the Asiatics do, is one of the reasons why Communist propaganda is in advance of us and that we have to learn to express ourselves in more than intellectual terms, including symbols that impress the Asiatic soul.

UP TO now, according to the picture presented by Mr. Payne, the Communist cells in the non-Communist Asiatic countries have been steadily growing. This leads, for instance, to the danger that the trans-Arabian and trans-Iranian pipelines may be cut some day by the natives and the West may be deprived of one-third of its oil.

In the fight between the two

worlds, Mr. Payne stresses, we have to know the natures of our enemies and friends and to annihilate the influence of Moscow propaganda which claims that the Americans are at least as imperialistic as the Japanese were, only much more effective.

We should not overemphasize our confidence that we are technologically superior to the Asiatic nations; we have had many occasions to observe how readily they acquire mechanical skills. "To insist on free enterprise in Asia, where only the rich are free, is to insist upon something which the Asiatics, with their inherent sense of community, are unlikely to find palatable. We must find means of bridging the gap between our thoughts and their traditional ways of life."

"Only a progressive America can make contact with revolutionary Asia: if America aligns herself with the princes and the landlords, everything will be lost." With stormy impatience Mr. Payne asks us Americans to hurry our decisions; the next months may be decisive for the issues of war and peace in the next century. We should never forget that in a long struggle the greater human resources of the Asiatic nations are a great asset.

In an appendix Payne gives some biographical notes on the Asiatic Communist leaders. If one compares them with the notes on the same persons in the book *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia* by Thompson and Adloff, published just a year ago, one sees how little we know about all these personalities and how contradictory are the life stories in these two books. The crux of the matter is, of course, that these facts are mostly gathered from Communist and anti-Communist propaganda, both doubtful sources of factual information. It is evident from these biographies that the West failed to see the talents and potentialities of these people before they fell under the influence of the men in the Kremlin. Many of the brilliant Communist leaders in Asia might have been won for our cause, if watched and approached at the right time.

MAX FISCHER.

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*Once Around the Sun. Brooks Atkinson. Harcourt, Brace. \$4.*

**B**ROOKS ATKINSON must be a very methodical man to have been able to write a diary covering all the 365 days of a single year. The result of such an attempt is inevitable. No man, not even Brooks Atkinson, can feel brilliant 365 days in the year. Hence, the book is terribly uneven. Wisdom and entertainment rub friendly shoulders with tedium, naturalness with strain. If one attempts a book about things "around the sun" it is perhaps to be expected that everything under the sun should be discussed. History, neighbors, election day, politics, St. Swithin's Day, Thanksgiving Day, humor, Thomas Jefferson, Passover, God, Armistice Day, the temperature, national culture, children, the theater, street scenes, Communism, the Russian Orthodox church, Labor Day, sparrows, "dog days," Thoreau, the solar system, life in the country—all these and dozens and dozens of other things which make up life in this

preposterous universe are grist to Atkinson's mill.

If he is rich in his facts, he is no less rich in the reflections he hangs on his facts. The reader will surely like his essay on humor: "Trust only the men who laugh with relish. I trust Shakespeare more than Corneille, Mark Twain more than Henry James, Robert Frost more than T. S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway more than Thomas Mann. They do not expect to vanquish folly from the world overnight."

JOHN COUNOS.

*The Pacific Islands. Douglas L. Oliver. Harvard University Press. \$5.*

**T**HE magic evocative in a South Sea Island was dispelled with ugly ruthlessness for many Americans in World War II, but with our flag now flying not only over Hawaii, Guam and Eastern Samoa but all the Marianas, Marshalls and Carolines, Professor Oliver of Har-

vard has decided that it is time for a handbook of the 10,000 islands and thousands of natives comprising Oceania and its three ethnic groups of Micronesians, Melanesians and Polynesians.

Dr. Oliver feels that tragedy began for Oceania when Magellan circumnavigated the world in 1522. Adventurous sails followed flying Spanish, Portuguese, English and Dutch flags but no serious exploitation of the islands began until after the whalers' visit in the 18th century. The small traders who were responsible for cutting down whole sandalwood forests gave place in the 19th century to the planters, mostly English and German, for whose increasing crops of copra and sugar it was necessary to supplement the labor of the easy going Polynesians by raiding the Melanesian islands of the Solomons and New Hebrides of their hardier Negroid population. The same demand for labor led to the settlement of Orientals and Filipinos in Hawaii and of East Indians in Fiji where they now outnumber

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the aborigines. The British Navy finally put an end to the baleful activities of the "blackbirders" but not until they had nearly depopulated the New Hebrides. Human shipments from Polynesia were also taken as far as Mexico and Peru.

It seems a tenet of faith for many anthropologists that endemic paganism is far preferable to imported Christianity. Professor Oliver admits that in the New Hebrides "the only good whites the natives knew were a handful of missionaries" but in speaking of the Solomons, remarks that the missions "invite adherence to a set of bizarre rules about bishops and human conduct," and doubts any fundamental change in the morals or religion of the converts. Although he spent two years in New Guinea, he makes no mention of the work in South Papua of the Sacred Heart missionaries who built the only roads into the interior, organized a school system, introduced new fruits and vegetables and now have a native order of nuns and the beginning of a native clergy. All he

grants the beneficent rule for natives inaugurated by Sir William McGregor in New Guinea is that "it transforms first rate savages into third rate subjects." He ignores the cooperation of the Melanesians with the Allies in World War II. The abolition of head-hunting and cannibalism are discounted as well as the discontinuance of the prostitution of young girls before marriage as practiced in Micronesia and Polynesia — anthropology calls it "virginity-cultism."

What is the future for our American islands? Dr. Oliver predicts that Hawaii will become a more closely populated, bustling American state where ethnic differences will give place to economic distinction and where tourists will ultimately prove more profitable than even pineapples or sugar. That Samoa will demand more autonomy. That the Marianas, Marshalls and Carolines have no hope of being permitted happily to revert to their prehistoric culture but that the Department of Interior as administrator of our Trust Terri-

tory will do its best to make their natives into healthy Americans. It remains to be seen if these Micronesians who are thus condemned to "live in one world and think in another" will be able to adjust themselves to these combined and conflicting cultures. The most hopeful development for all Oceania is the formation by New Zealand and Australia with the United Kingdom, France, Holland and the USA of the South Pacific Commission with headquarters at Noumea and an international staff to study and promote the economic and social welfare of the non-self-governing territories of the South Pacific.

In spite of its rich subject matter, this is rather a dry book with no maps except decorative ones, little exact information and a sketchy bibliography. Any one who tries to find out the latest distinction between a Micronesian and a Polynesian—except geographically—will be baffled. Mrs. Oliver's black and white drawings are the happiest feature.

E.V.R. WYATT.

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*Pacific Hopscotch. Sister Maria del Rey. Scribners. \$3.*

SINCE Sister Maria del Rey was a reporter for the Pittsburgh Press before she entered Maryknoll, it may be assumed that she had early ambitions to write. Her style is smooth and easy, as she tells of her year's trip to Maryknoll missions in China, the Philippines, Guam, Palau, Japan, Korea and Hawaii. She says that despite the Communist threat, the Chinese, in large numbers, have asked to be Catholics. She tells of a village that had 12 Catholics in 1938, and 1,800 now, and another that had none a year ago, a hundred now. She reports on Sister Agnew, who was Mary Chang, sister of John Chang, now premier. Sister Agnew dared to go into Communist Pyongyang to be with the Catholics there and was killed by the Reds. An appealing story is told about the Catholic Igorot young man who married Kitma, and brought her into the Church. The one about the lepers at Molokai will stay with you.

Most Maryknollers appear to be handy with cameras. Sister Maria del Rey's book has 47 good photographic illustrations.

HARRY W. FLANNERY.

*Fenelon's Dialogues on Eloquence. Translation, with introduction and notes, by Wilbur Samuel Howell. Princeton University Press. \$3.*

OF WHAT does true eloquence consist and how may a reasonable man aspire to it? Here, in a new translation by Wilbur Samuel Howell, is a labor of love and a triumph of learning. With the same sensitivity evidenced by Fenelon himself, the translator has restored the true nature and stature of this remarkable work.

Written by Fenelon, when he was only twenty-eight, the *Dialogues* are truly the beginning of modern rhetoric. They take their vitality from Plato, Cicero and Saint Augustine but their style is the style of Fenelon. He does not reject the ancient doctrines but he does repudiate the rigid formalisms. Everything must be

natural and simple. The means must be subordinate to the end. There must be no lavish display of technique for the mere sake of technique.

Here, in fact, is one of the keys to the whole art of communication. Critics, no less than preachers, could read and ponder this volume with profit. Here we learn once more the lessons that are always new because they are so often forgotten. Life comes before art, content before style. The instrument can not be greater than the music.

EMMET LAVERY.

*The Monarch of the Glen. Compton Mackenzie. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.*

A SCOTTISH laird cavorts about the ancient domain of his clan as if he were living in the days when his doughty forebears bowled down everyone before them. When his rule is challenged by a lively group of campers in shorts from the National Union of Hikers, and by a couple of Scottish nationalists, the fur flies. Somehow these new antagonists fail to go down like ninepins as expected. Mr. Mackenzie has added to the charms of this simply contrived, humorous tale by throwing in a mild-mannered love story for good measure.

## • REVIEWERS •

MAX FISCHER, who is now on the faculty of the New School in New York, was formerly a foreign correspondent in the Orient for German newspapers.

JOHN CURNOS reviews regularly for the New York *Herald-Tribune*, the *Times* and other publications.

E.V.R. WYATT is drama critic for the *Catholic World*.

HARRY W. FLANNERY is now on the editorial staff of the *Catholic Digest*.

EMMET LAVERY is a Hollywood producer and author of *First Legion* and *The Magnificent Yankee*.

# A Point of View VII

## The Mode of Truth

**G**OOD writing is a part of truth... If you take a proposition and state it in a sentimental way, in a sectarian way, in a vulgar way, you damage the truth of it. You damage the truth itself because you distort it; you also sin against the truth inasmuch as you tend to distort or degrade the mind of your readers...

Too much contemporary journalism appeals precisely to a part only of the personality; at best to the reason, at worst to the fallen senses or emotions in isolation from the spirit.

To set events against a backdrop of eternal values: it means first of all to see humanity whole. If you report a murder in the manner of the gutter-press, you de-personalize the people concerned in it; they become not human beings but things, means to sensation.

The Catholic writer must treat human beings as ends, not means; he must show them in the round; and then he must see and treat their lives, their thoughts and actions as having immortal significance. So will he be helping to restore to our shallow world the sense of depth; and in doing that he will be doing work which is itself of eternal value.

GERALD VANN, O.P.  
in The Commonwealth, February 23, 1951

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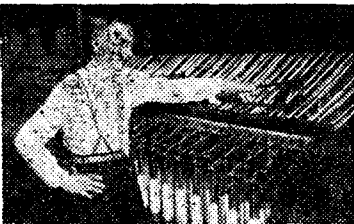
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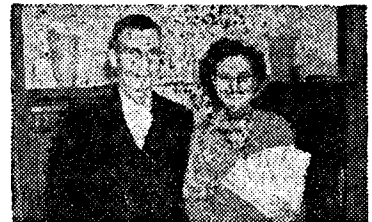
*Mr. Whatley inspects a beehive on his 202-acre farm. "I wouldn't own a farm, clear, today," he says, "if it weren't for U. S. Savings Bonds. We bought a new truck, refrigerator and electric range, too. I've discovered that bonds are the best way of saving for a working man."*



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"We're still holding bonds, too. We don't believe that anyone should cash his bonds unless he has to, so we're holding about \$1,800 worth. With that cash reserve, and our farm clear, we can grow old with comfort and peace of mind. Everybody should buy U. S. Savings Bonds!"

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